Enhancing strike capability of Agni Ballistic Missile

†640. SHRIMATI SAVITA SHARDA: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are contemplating to enhance the striking capability of Agni Ballistic Missile;

(b) if so, whether Government have taken any steps in this regard so far; and

(c) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) to (c) Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) is working on design and development, leading to production of 'Agni' Ballistic Missile System based on strategic requirement of Indian Armed Forces. It has always been an endeavour of DRDO scientists to improve capability of the missile systems keeping in view the security requirement of the nation.

Delegation of more powers to Services H.Q.

†641. SHRIMATI SAVITA SHARDA: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government propose to delegate more powers to Services Headquarters;

(b) if so, the details thereof and by when it is likely to be implemented; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) and (b) As part of the process of reforming the National Security System initiated by the Government, the Armed Forces are being vested with higher administrative and financial powers to ensure expeditious decision-making and their execution. Accordingly, orders relating to enhancement of administrative powers concerning various personnel, training and related administrative matters to them have already been issued. The enhanced financial powers in areas such as procurement of stores, write off of losses, local purchases, incurrence of petty expenditure etc. delegated to the Services will be exercised by them with effect from next financial year.

†Original notice of the Question was received in Hindi.